

Control Continuum

The control continuum organizes a police officer's control options into distinct levels from least, to most forceful. It is not necessary to progress through each level before selecting the appropriate one. Police officers can "rule out" lower level options if they believe them to be ineffective or inappropriate, and immediately select the most appropriate level to control the person.

The levels of control available to officers of the Winnipeg Police to assist in de-escalating situations are as follows;

Officer Presence

The presence of a police officer is often enough to elicit compliance and cooperation. A professional, and non-confrontational demeanor can often prevent a person's resistance or violent behavior thus effectively de-escalating a situation simply by arriving on scene and exhibiting a Command Presence.

Examples include: symbols of authority (i.e. a uniform, badge, marked police vehicle)

Verbal Direction

Giving verbal commands and telling a subject exactly what they must do in plain language, can assist in de-escalating or preventing a situation from further escalating. Unless it is inappropriate or ineffective, verbal direction (through tactical communication and de-escalation techniques) should be used prior to escalating to higher levels of control. Verbal direction should continue even when moving to higher levels of control.

Soft Empty Hand Control

Applying a physical force with a low potential for injury. This can include something as simple as taking a hold of someone, lifting them, pushing them, applying a pressure point technique or immobilizing a joint with a principle based joint lock without hyperextension or hyperflexion. These techniques, used in conjunction with Verbal Direction, can effectively gain a subject's compliance and de-escalate a situation.

Hard Empty Hand Control

Applying a physical force with a higher likelihood of injury, but not expected to cause grievous bodily harm or death. This is typically empty-handed strikes to non-lethal targets of the body such as a knee strike to the leg, or tackling someone to the ground. These techniques are often used if Soft Empty Hand Control would be ineffective or inappropriate based on the circumstances of the situation. These techniques, used in conjunction with Verbal Direction, can effectively gain a subject's compliance and de-escalate a situation, preventing further (or greater) harm coming to the subject or officer.

Intermediate Weapon

Using issued less-than-lethal weapons (Taser, Baton, OC Spray) with the intent to temporarily incapacitate a subject to overcome their resistance when lower levels of force would be inappropriate or ineffective and lethal force is not justified based on the totality of the circumstances. These are often used to gain compliance via coercion only, de-escalating a volatile situation with no harm to the subject.

Lethal Force

Lethal force is justified when:

- the police officers, or another person's, life is in immediate danger
- the police officer, or another person, is in immediate danger of grievous bodily harm.

When using a lethal force level, the ultimate goal is to stop the lethal force threat directed at the officer, or another person, regardless of whether it results in death or not.

Includes any use of, or threat to use, techniques or weapons that are likely to cause grievous bodily harm or death. Eg) An officer pointing their firearm to coerce compliance. In these cases, de-escalation not only prevents injury, but also preserves the lives of the subject and the officer.